

The Netanyahu Effect: Kerry Embarrassed Into Seeking A Not-Quite-As-Bad Deal

Even if you remain in the camp of those who refused to be impressed by Netanyahu's artful performance before Congress, even if you have more faith in the hard-bargaining of Wendy Sherman, and John Kerry, and even if you think that Obama means it sincerely when he assures Israel's supporters at this or that gathering that he's "got Israel's back," and feels keenly – only the mean-minded could possibly deny it? – the dangers that Israel has had to deal with, and will have to deal with, and feels keenly too, Jewish history, and whenever he thinks of Injustice the examples that naturally spring first to his mind are those involving the Jews as the most persecuted tribe in human history – even if you believe all that, you still must concede one thing: Netanyahu set things out with such clear-headed lucidity, explained that of course he did not want war but wanted a good rather than a bad deal, and that in explaining what was wrong with what appeared to be in the works, he made it more difficult for John Kerry to agree to terms that, without Netanyahu's well-publicized intervention, he appeared ready to accept.

Now he can't. He just can't. It would be too embarrassing, too obviously maladroit.

And that is what Netanyahu, by force not of arms but of words, managed to achieve.